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THE TURKISH BATH.

Misconceptions Corrected.

True Value Explained.

Misconceptions
of.So much nonsense has been talked about this kind of bath, there has been so much misapprehension concerning it, so many misleading and unwarranted statements have been made about it, its primary object and real simplicity have been so obscured, that it seems desirable to make an effort to dissipate these illusions by a plain statement of realities.

Some of these illusions are: That the Turkish bath enervates; that one is more liable to take cold after it; that it is for the weak and sick, and not for the strong; that it is frequented chiefly by an objectionable class of people. Each of these is fully capable of rebuttal.

The inherent property of this bath, and the one that would appeal to the general public, could it be made clear, is its *power to cleanse*.

According to popular belief, this bath is an unvarying one. It is thought that every individual is subjected to the same process in every particular. No idea could be farther from the truth. While there are unchangeable features, the details, such as length of time in the heat, combination with vapor, temperature of the spray and amount of water used, use or non-use of

Illusions
refuted.



soap, application of a cold sheet instead of the spray, a swim in the Plunge or not, etc., etc., are varied to meet the individual needs of the bather in order to secure desired results.

Most Cleansing Bath.

With growing intelligence and interest in sanitary matters has been developed a greater desire for personal cleanliness. Not so very many years ago a single bathroom in the house was considered a luxury. Now there is a demand for many — one on every floor at least, and private ones besides. Since such demand exists, would it not seem reasonable to suppose that the bath that most completely cleanses would be the one most sought? Doubtless such would be the case were the details of such a bath clearly understood. To give such an understanding will be the aim of this paper. Therapeutic effects will be alluded to later, but first and chiefly the bath will be considered purely from the standpoint of its *cleansing* properties.

Anatomy of the Skin.

It will be remembered that the skin consists of two layers, the derma or true skin, underneath, and the epidermis or cuticle on the surface, the latter serving as a protection to the former. Growth and renewal are from below upward, and the successive layers of cells that form the cuticle mature and die and are removed by friction, bathing, etc., from the surface.

Concerning Sweat Glands.

The lower part of the true skin is composed of rather coarse fibres with comparatively large interstices, which are filled with fat and with the oil and sweat glands. The function of glands is to secrete certain elements from the blood and to use this secretion in the economy of the body or to excrete it from the system. The most important secretion and excretion of the sweat gland is water, and it is upon the excretion of water that the cleansing efficiency of this bath depends.

A sweat gland consists of a minute tube coiled upon itself

into a knot, from which it finds its way to the surface where it opens by a slight enlargement or mouth. Physiologists reckon about two millions of these glands scattered throughout the body. From which it would almost seem that the surface of the body is composed, chiefly, of these little mouths or openings. Like all reservoirs, these glands need, for their perfect action, an unclogged outlet. If the tubes or ducts leading to the surface are closed or partially closed, the outlet is not free.

Dust and dirt particles may penetrate, and do penetrate, any opening, and the atmosphere, unfortunately, is filled with dust particles. In walking, for instance, clouds of dust are constantly encountered, the particles of which, impinging upon the skin, inevitably fill the mouths of these tiny ducts, and with each impingement such particles penetrate more deeply into the ducts and are there retained.

Does washing the surface of the body eject these particles? Were some soft substance forced into the faucet of a water pipe, would washing across the mouth of the faucet cleanse it? Manifestly not. Instinctively the valve is turned and the water pours through, carrying with it the obstruction. The Turkish bath turns the valve, so to speak. The high temperature excites the glands to action; perspiration pours through the ducts, carrying in its tiny stream the particles that occlude their mouths. The cleansing, as in the case of the water pipe, is from within outward, and no other method can do it. The same fluid moistens and loosens the scarf skin,—the dead cells on the surface of the body,—and under the manipulations of the shampooer and the subsequent scrub, all this extraneous matter is washed away, and the skin, so to speak, breathes again. The walls of the superficial blood vessels or capillaries have been relaxed by the heat. They

Incomplete
Effect of
Ordinary Bath.

Positive
Action of
Turkish Bath.

are contracted and recover tone under the succeeding spray or douche, graduated from hot to cold water, and a plunge into the pool, if desired. Thus the nerves of the skin are stimulated and the heart pumps the blood more forcibly to the surface, giving it an increased power of resistance to chill.

No Danger
of Taking
cold from
Turkish Bath.

The skin is liable to chill when the blood recedes and is congested in the internal organs, not when it is full of warm blood, circulating freely and rapidly to every superficial cell of the body. Why, then, should one "take cold more readily" after a bath that establishes the latter conditions? Why should one be "enervated" by a cleansing and vitalizing process adapted to individual needs? Theory and practice both disprove these two assertions.

Stimulant
to Appetite.

As the bath, like all exercise, is a process of breaking down tissue, which is to be replaced with new, by food and rest, a quiet hour, at least, should be spent after it. The bath is a good stimulant for the appetite — many emerging "as hungry as bears," they say.

Insufficiency
of Tub-Bath.

A hot tub-bath does not accomplish the same end, because few, if any, can comfortably prolong it sufficiently to excite free perspiration ; the process is less gradual, and no one is willing to do for himself what the shampooer does for him, and the part played by the latter is most important. If any one doubts this let him take as thorough a tub-bath as he can and immediately take a Turkish bath. His own eyes will convince him.

Physical
Stimulant.

There is a good deal of exercise in the processes of the bath, and if one is unaccustomed to exercise, the first baths may tire, as will horseback riding, skating, tennis and other unwonted exercises, in the beginning. After a little, exhilaration comes instead. Such effect, if it happens, should be a warning to the

bather of a lack of vigor in himself, rather than an indication of an enervating result of the bath, which should therefore be abandoned. Perseverance will overcome this effect. The timidity and apprehension with which some enter the bath would be amusing, were it not matter of regret that anything so delightful as this most invigorating bath should be so misapprehended.

Many take a bath every week with most beneficial results, and were it possible to reduce the expense to meet the purses of all, little doubt is entertained that it would eventually be sought as regularly as the old-fashioned Saturday night scrub, before the advent of the bathroom.

Dr. Woods, of the Clinton Street Baths in Brooklyn, N. Y. took a bath daily for a year and was not only not "enervated" by it, but found himself in unusually good condition. Shampooers who are in the heat all day are proverbially a healthy class of workers. Constant bathers do not say that they are not clean if they omit the bath for a season, but they do not hesitate to say that they never feel so light and refreshed and renewed as after it.

The belief in the deleterious effects of hot air and vapor baths, given in hygienic surroundings and with proper supervision, exists only in the minds of the uninformed, and is wholly dissipated by experience. The effect of the bath on the

COMPLEXION

is most convincing. One emerges several shades lighter, a fact evident not alone to the bather, but to an interested observer of conditions "before and after." Naturally, the complexion will be more brilliant when deep-seated impurities have been removed, and when well-oxygenized blood, the result of exercise, courses more abundantly through the capillaries.

Frequent
Baths not
Injurious.

Effect on
Complexion.

With an inactive skin, not infrequently, come pimples and

other disfigurements, caused by accumulations of waste matter. These the bath will remove, unless induced by constitutional disorder, and even then it will assist in removing.

Our girls can find no cosmetic so effective, and the bath is a safe procedure, which cannot be said of cosmetics.

HAIR

Effect on Growth of Hair.

Since the head perspires with the rest of the body during the bath, the manipulations of the shampooer are as necessary on the head as elsewhere, and the resulting cleanliness of the scalp and invigoration of its capillaries cannot fail to exert a stimulating and beneficial influence on the hair follicles. The ordinary head shampoo removes only superficial waste matter ; it does not free the clogged ducts, consequently, the head shampoo after the bath is the best that can be taken, and the ease with which it is given is greatly appreciated.

From the preceding pages it would seem to be indubitable that the Turkish bath must take precedence of all others as a cleansing process. Long years of experience prove that, if administered under healthful conditions, any one may take it frequently and with beneficial results.

THERAPEUTIC EFFECTS

Radical Curative Effects.

It may be well just to touch upon the curative qualities of the bath without dwelling upon the scientific side. In the practice of hydrotherapy it holds a legitimate place. That drugs only assist nature to effect cures of abnormal and diseased conditions is all that is claimed for them by the most advanced physicians. The claim may be confidently made that these baths powerfully

assist nature in throwing off diseased conditions, while some maladies are cured by their aid. The effect on

CIRCULATION

is very marked. Impeded circulation is restored. It is one of the surest correctives for cold hands and feet, a symptom of imperfect circulation not infrequently accompanied by a painful rush of blood to the head and kindred troubles.

Since the blood is the medium through whose agency all changes in the body are effected, its free flow is a necessity to health. Any means that will safely restore lost equilibrium must be an aid to cure.

RHEUMATISM

This disease, still so baffling to the medical profession, caused, as is supposed, by uncompleted changes in the body and the retention of urea in the system, is greatly relieved by the bath. Since urea is one of the elements of the sweat secretion, free perspiration must assist in the elimination of some of it. Whatever the reasoning, too many sufferers from this painful malady have sought and found relief in the baths to leave any doubt of their beneficent influence. The sufferers emerge from the bath, saying, "I have left all my aches behind me." The relief may be more or less permanent, but it is such as they have found from no other source, according to their own statement. Such relief would be more permanent were the baths taken more frequently.

Circulation
Improved.

Rheumatic
Pains
Relieved.

COLDS AND GRIPPE

The claim has been made that a bath will cure a cold. This has not been substantiated in the experience of the writer, unless taken on the first intimation of a symptom. Several baths, taken daily, will much shorten the so-called "run" of the cold and eradicate all the aches. A recent personal experience has been

Good Effect
on Colds.

most convincing. Activity of the skin certainly assists most powerfully in eliminating the matter disabling the muscles, whatever it may be.

CORPULENCE

Reduction of Flesh.

This condition is always benefited, but, to effect radical change, the bath should be taken in connection with exercise and a reasonably abstemious diet. As many as three pounds are sometimes lost in a single bath, but may be recovered at the next heavy meal. *Hot air baths, exercise and diet will reduce flesh safely and surely.*

Other ills are relieved. The wife of a physician, who had sought relief, in vain, from specialists at home and abroad, has been cured of a painful malady by the persistent application of Turkish baths.

Comparison of Establish- ments.

Enough has been said to give some understanding of the effects of such baths on the system. It should be stated that the Turkish bath, as a curative agency, is valueless unless taken very frequently. In some cases a *daily* bath for a week or more is necessary. Then it may be taken less frequently. An occasional bath has the cleansing value, but nothing further. It must be acknowledged that there is a great difference in the bath establishments. There are baths that are conducted as a purely business enterprise, and there are baths where hygienic conditions constitute the primary feature. The former kind is much more common. Such baths may be designated as

COMMERCIAL TURKISH BATHS AND HYGIENIC TURKISH BATHS

Commercial Baths.

Until somewhat recently, men have much more generally patronized these establishments than women, consequently arrangements for women have not been all that might be desired.

Occasionally there is a separate Department for women, as in the Clinton Street Baths in Brooklyn, N. Y. Very rare are the baths, devoted to the interests of women alone, like the Allen Gymnasium Baths. The almost universal arrangement is to re-serve a few morning hours — sometimes a part of Sunday — for women, in rooms occupied at other times by men. In most such establishments supervision of individual baths and adaptation to individual needs do not enter into the scheme. Patrons enter the bath as fast as they arrive, and as many as possible are received. The hot rooms will accommodate a comparatively large number of bathers, while the shampooers are limited in number, as are the shampoo-rooms, where only one can be served at a time. From which arrangement it is evident that one may easily be forced to remain too long in the heat before reaching a shampooer, and so lose beneficial results and, from this possibility, may have arisen the fear of "enervation," which exists in the popular mind. The location and general arrangements of these baths is not always the most hygienic. They are situated, usually, in the business part of the town, for economy's sake often occupy a basement, are heated by direct radiation — radiators in the rooms — with artificial light and questionable ventilation. Private resting rooms may sometimes be had for an additional fee, but for the mass of bathers a large "cooling-room" is provided, filled with couches, usually upholstered in plush or tapestry, impossible to keep clean or easily to renew. All seek this room after the bath to cool off before dressing. Conversation is general and rest, so imperative for best results, is impossible. The hours devoted to men's use frequently extend through the night and smoking is allowed. If temperatures must be at regulation height for women at nine o'clock in the morning, it is difficult to see how

Accommodations for women.

Cooling Room.

Hygienic Baths.

the air can be properly purified for them. Contrast with this the arrangement and detail of a hygienic bath like

THE ALLEN GYMNASIUM BATHS,

a department of an institution devoted to the maintenance and restoration of health, built on an entirely different plan, and conducted on entirely different principles. This is one of the rare establishments mentioned before,— and in few cities can such be found,— devoted exclusively to women and children. These Baths are entirely above ground, with light and air on three sides and abundant sunshine. They are finished in marble, tile and white enamel paint, and are most invitingly pure and dainty. Plushes, tapestries, and all hangings have been discarded as unhygienic; the mattresses are of wire with only a very thin padding of hair, easily renewed, with detachable linen covers, and everything, even to the pincushion covers, is washable. These precautions are most essential where many people congregate. The linen is washed under the same roof, which still further conduces to safety. The heating is indirect—not by radiators in the rooms, which only keep the inside air hot,— but the air is passed over hot radiators *outside*, enters by gravity pressure, and is circulated through the rooms by a mechanical fan, thus insuring constant circulation of pure heated air. No deterioration can be detected in the air in the late afternoon; no taint of tobacco is in it. The Baths are not in use at night, and are freely ventilated by outside cold air before closing. Thus is secured that greatest essential of health—pure air. The Pool is a joy to behold, with its sunshine and sparkling artesian well water, containing no sediment, but buoyant with minerals held in solution, falling from two marble fountains into the tile-encircled basin. Here swimming lessons are given in the spring.

Swimming Pool.

Swimming Lessons.

**Private Resting
Rooms.**

There is no general cooling room. The builder and the writer investigated bath establishments in New York during construction of the building, and, finding nothing to meet their ideals, returned to embody their own ideas. *Private resting rooms*, with dainty white beds and necessary toilet conveniences, were substituted for the publicity of the *cooling room*, an arrangement that has been much appreciated by the class of bathers that frequent these baths. Thus is secured the quiet and repose so essential for best results. Screens are provided in the hot rooms to insure greater privacy, if one desires it. No exposure of any kind is allowed and one may feel almost as retired as in her own home. In the hot rooms, the absence of the cold compress on the head and the hot foot bath among the bathers is very noticeable. The discovery was soon made that the "bursting head" so often complained of, is due to *impure air* and not to *pure, hot air*. Many bathers who have only bathed here never think a cold head compress necessary, while those coming from other baths think it is needed because they have always used it. As one object of the bath is to equalize the circulation, it would seem to be more easily accomplished by subjecting the whole body to the same temperature. For this reason the cabinet bath where the head and body are not in the same temperature has not been used. Were there any demand for it by either physician or patron, it would be introduced at any time.

In this establishment every bath is supervised; no bather is allowed to enter the high temperatures until, when the time she requires has expired, she can command the services of a shampooer, thus precluding any possibility of overstaying in the heat. Bells from every part of the baths communicate with the office, where the superintendent is always in attendance. The timid and nervous are ministered to and their fears allayed. The

Cabinet Bath.

**Supervision
of Baths.**

No Fees
Allowed.

Patients safe
here.

Appointments.

shampooers have been employed many years and are well versed in their vocation. They are solicitous for best results, and since *no fees are allowed*, each bather receives the same courteous attention.

Physicians may confidently send their patients here, and women who frequent these baths without a physician's advice, as a large proportion do, because they are perfectly well, are equally safe-guarded. For a first bath there is a regulation length of time to be spent in the heat, so short as to preclude any undue weariness. This is made the basis for subsequent baths, until one suited to the temperament of the individual is found. Afterward she adheres to such bath.

No matter how many are waiting, no bath is ever hurried or curtailed. Quality in the bath, not quantity of receipts, is the primary object sought. Patrons may make appointments for their baths, thus obviating tedious waiting. This is a unique feature, and one that adds much to the comfort of patrons.

Such are

THE ALLEN GYMNASIUM TURKISH BATHS,
42 AND 44 ST. BOTOLPH ST., BOSTON.

The completeness and beauty of their equipment, the refinement of surroundings, their dissimilarity to many other Baths, in general arrangements and in administration, which are now for the first time set forth, will, it is believed, attract many whose attention has not been drawn to them before, and it is hoped that they will be tempted to indulge in this safe and delightful means of cleansing and invigoration.

MARY E. ALLEN.